

**Town of West Hartford  
Human Rights Commission  
Mission Statement**

*"The West Hartford Human Rights Commission fosters mutual understanding and respect among people, and encourages equality of treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, civil union status, gender identity or expression, marital status, familial status, genetic information, age, economic status, lawful source of income, national origin or ancestry, or present or past history of physical, mental, intellectual or learning disability including, but not limited to blindness."*

**Town of West Hartford  
Human Rights Commission  
West Hartford Town Hall  
7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, January 3, 2017  
Room 217**

**Minutes**

**Attendance**

Krishna Adhikari	Present
Charles Andrews, Vice Chair	Excused
Judith Borden, Chair	Present
Charles Cleary, Secretary	Present
Denise Jackson-Riley	Present
Pramod Praphan, Administrative Liaison	Present
Sarah Raskin	Present
Karyl Shaughnessy	Present
Barry Walters	Present
Judith Wyman	Present

Also in attendance: three members of the public.

Barry moved and Judy B. seconded approval of the November 1, 2016 meeting minutes with no changes. The vote passed unanimously.

Judy B. distributed an updated listing of commission members. She asked the commissioners to introduce themselves to the two new commissioners. Of note:

- Karyl has a show on Chanel 5, Mom's Time Out, that airs the first Monday of every month at 9:00 p.m. and periodically thereafter. It is also available for viewing on YouTube.
- Krishna reported that the Nepalese Association of Connecticut is now listed on the Town of West Hartford's website under Community Organizations. The link is here:

<https://www.westhartfordct.gov/gov/volunteer/committees.asp>

Judy B. read briefly from the two new commission members bios and asked them to introduce themselves. Denise Jackson-Riley has been in West Hartford for the past three years, having been an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board, experienced with immigrant rights. Sarah Raskin is a professor at Trinity College. Sarah is one of the organizers of the Women's March on Washington scheduled for January 21, 2017.

Judy B. commended the commissioners on their outreach efforts to publicize that the commission had two vacancies. The Town received 14 resumes. Commissioners used the following methods: the Commission's Facebook page, Karyl mentioned it on her TV show, it was also posted on Neighbors & Friends as well as the Nextdoor app.

Judy K. updated the commissioners on International Human Rights Day, which was Saturday, December 10, 2016. She had emailed the Assistant Superintendent, but had not received a response. The two high schools treat the day differently. Conard does voluntary, small-group activities. Hall has trained the students to have facilitated discussions. Commission members agreed that schools should be included in the City of Compassion initiative.

Barry reported that a proclamation for World AIDS Day had not been requested from the mayor. Commissioners agreed it would be a good idea to request one for 2017.

On December 9, 2016, there was a Community Dialogue on Undocumented Residents. There is concern for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). West Hartford will not be a sanctuary city, but our actions are similar. Barry reported that New Haven is a sanctuary city. Pramod stated that Hartford is a sanctuary city in all but name. The West Hartford Police do not disclose status unless compelled by federal warrant. Judy B. asked commission members to pay attention to a group being formed to support West Hartford immigrants. Karyl will let commission members know when the group meets next.

Pramod gave an update on the town services guide for new immigrants. He reported that there is a federal document that is extensive, but overwhelming. There is a desire to create a more simplified, user-friendly guide for West Hartford immigrants. The guide would have useful information on topics like how to apply for jobs, registering children for school, getting a driver's license, etc. Krishna gave an example of when a snow day canceled schools, the information was not as easily communicated as one would believe. Pramod reported that Catholic Charities had a lot of useful information. He also stated that quite often older immigrants did not know how to read or write in their native language, and this created challenges. The Faxon Library branch, on New Britain Avenue, has a Welcome Center for Immigrants. Judy B. reported that a West Hartford app is being developed. She suggested having the guide be included on the app.

Barry reported that Town Council Member Ben Wenograd had contacted him for an update on the Charter/City of Compassion. Chuck A., Chuck C. and Barry are the sub-committee that has been working on this. At the November Commission meeting, the sub-committee had presented a proposed document for review. Commissioners had liked the document, but added one bullet point – to include the business community. Commissioners reviewed the document and made the following changes:

- Include the public schools with the following language: That the Town promote human rights education, including public school engagement and recognition of International Human Rights Day;
- The bullet regarding the business community be amended to include healthcare;
- That the language regarding schools on page one match the resolution on page two

The updated document is included at the end of the minutes.

Judy B. moved and Barry seconded that the Commission members agreed that with these changes, the West Hartford Human Rights Commission approves this document and supports presenting this to the Town Council for consideration that West Hartford become a City of Compassion. The motion passed unanimously. Barry said he would arrange for the sub-committee to meet with Ben Wenograd once Chuck C. makes the above changes.

Judy K. reported that the Town will celebrate Martin Luther King Day in the Town Hall Auditorium on January 16, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. She said the program is very good, and she encouraged commission members to attend. She also mentioned that Asylum Hill Congregational Church had a film called Get In the Way about John Lewis on Sunday January 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m..

Pramod asked if the Commission had a calendar of events. The Commission has focused on the following events:

- Martin Luther King Day
- Park Road Parade
- One Book, One Town
- World AIDS Day (New)

Judy B. and Barry seconded a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chuck Cleary  
January 8, 2017

On January 3, 2017, the West Hartford Human Rights Commission voted to approve presenting to the Mayor & West Hartford a proposal to endorse the Charter of Compassion and become a City of Compassion.

### **Charter for Compassion (Background)**

On February 28, 2008 Karen Armstrong won the TED Prize and made a wish: for help creating, launching, and propagating a Charter for Compassion. On November 12, 2009, the Charter was unveiled to the world.

As of December 29, 2014, over 110,000 other people from around the world had affirmed it. On April 26, 2010, Seattle became the first city in the world to affirm the charter. US Cities that have signed the Charter include at least one in Connecticut. Other American cities include Milford, CT, Las Vegas, Louisville, Salt Lake, Spokane, Tulsa, and Tucson. International Cities that have signed include Belfast, Canberra, London, Karachi, Rotterdam, Sragen-Indonesia as well as the Country of Botswana

The Charter for Compassion also includes various partners in Business, Healthcare, Education, and others. Several Connecticut schools have become Campuses of Compassion including Central Connecticut State University, the University of Saint Joseph, Western Connecticut State University, and Capital Community College.

The West Hartford Human Rights Commission believes that the Town of West Hartford has had a long history of compassion. The Town, and its citizens, actively engage in numerous compassionate activities. These efforts have resulted in West Hartford being recognized nationally as one of the best places to live in the country.

The West Hartford Human Rights Commission recommends the following action steps if the resolution is adopted:

- That the theme of the initiative be recognized as: Diversity
- That the West Hartford Human Rights Commission be designated as the group to coordinate efforts under the City of Compassion
- That the West Hartford Human Rights Commission report to the Town Manager annually the efforts undertaken by the Town as a City of Compassion
- That the Mayor of West Hartford sponsor an annual Volunteer Week, encouraging town residents to volunteer to better the Town
- That the Town recognize the various diverse groups by highlighting their experiences
- That the Town engage the business and healthcare communities as active partners
- That the Town promote human rights education, including public school engagement and recognition of International Human Rights Day

## The West Hartford Town Council Endorses the Charter for Compassion

### RESOLUTION

A Resolution to formally sign the Charter for Compassion and to designate the Town of West Hartford as a compassionate City; and for other purposes:

Whereas Karen Armstrong, a respected scholar was awarded the 2008 TED Prize created the Charter of Compassion and;

Whereas Connecticut cities and colleges have already endorsed the Charter, including Milford Central Connecticut State University, the University of Saint Joseph, Western Connecticut State University, and Capital Community College;

Whereas the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution in June of 2013 to endorse the Campaign for Compassionate Cities:

Whereas the Town of West Hartford is recognized as one of the best places in the country to live and has a rich history of compassion;

Whereas by designating West Hartford as a Compassionate City we call on other cities and towns to join us in supporting the principle of compassion and acts of compassion.

Now, therefore be it resolved by the Town Council of West Hartford, Connecticut, that the West Hartford Town Council hereby signs on to the Charter of Compassion.

Be it further resolved by the Town Council of West Hartford is designated as a Compassionate City.